

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00255 271812Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T LUSAKA 0255

EXDIS

FOR SCHAUFEE

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR RH ZA
SUBJ: EARLY REACTIONS TO RHODESIAN IMPASSE

1. THE LEVEL OF BITTERNESS AND FRUSTRATION OVER WHAT IS CONSIDERED
HERE AS THE IMPASSE IN NEGOTIATIONS FOR MAJORITY RULE IN
RHODESIA IS RISING RAPIDLY. THIS IS LEADING THE ZAMBIANS,
NATIONALISTS AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS TO LASH OUT AT WHATEVER
SOURCE CAN BE BLAMED FOR FAILURE. INITIALLY OF COURSE IT IS
SMITH, BUT BECUASE HE IS UNAVAILABLE AND APPARENTLY IMPREGNABLE,
THE BLAME IS RAPIDLY BEING SHIFTED TO THOSE ON WHOM PRESSURE
CAN MORE EASILY BE BROUGHT. OBVIOUSLY THIS IS, IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE, THE BRITISH, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY THE US.

2. THE FIRST REACTION BY MOST AFRICANS IS TO TALK LOUDLY ABOUT
INTENSIFYING THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND SEEKING AN UNEQUIVOCAL
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MILITARY VICTORY. THERE IS A KIND OF BRAVADO REFLECTED IN SPEECHES
AND THE PRESS WHICH ACCOMPANIES TURNING TO AROS FROM THE
COMPLEXITIES OF NEGOTIATIONS.

3. TWO OTHER REACTIONS ARE BEING HEARD WITH INCREASING FREQUENCY.

THE FIRST IS THAT SMITH WOULD NOT HAVE DARED TURN DOWN THE BRITISH

PROPOSAL WITHOUT ASSURANCES FROM THE SOUTH AFRICANS THAT THEY WOULD CONTINUE THEIR SUPPORT. SMITH'S NEW CONFIDENCE AND ASSURANCE IN HIS INTERNAL OPTION MUST BE DUE TO SOME NEW ELEMENT, THEY SAY. MORE THOUGHTFUL ZAMBIAN OBSERVERS ASCRIBE PART OF THIS TO THE FRONTLINE RECOGNITION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WHICH STRENGTHENED HIM DOMESTICALLY. FEW STOP THERE, HOWEVER. COMMENTS ARE INCREASINGLY ASSOCIATING THE UNITED STATES WITH THE SUPPOSED SOUTH AFRICAN ASSURANCES. IT IS SAID THAT THE PRESSURE WHICH KISSINGER BROUGHT IN SEPTEMBER ON RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA HAS CLEARLY BEEN RELIEVED AND SMITH KNOWS IT. OTHERS, MORE CHARITABLY, BELIEVE SMITH IS TESTING THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

4. ANOTHER THEME WHICH IS BEING FREQUENTLY REPEATED SEEMS TO BE A MEASURE OF THE DEPTH OF FRUSTRATION BEING FELT. ACCORDING TO IT, AS SOME POINT IN RECENT MONTHS AMERICAN OFFICIALS, OR KISSINGER HIMSELF, ASSURED HIGHEST LEVEL AFRICAN LEADERS THAT THE US COULD OR WOULD ELIMINATE SMITH FROM THE PICTURE. THIS PERMITS PEOPLE TO TURN TO US AND PUT THE BURDEN FOR RESOLUTION OF THE PRESENT CRISIS ON OUR SHOULDERS. AS THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR SAID, "WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO FULFILL YOUR COMMITMENT TO GET RID OF SMITH?"

5. THE DEPT SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT ON JAN 26 WILL HELP SOMEWHAT IN REPLYING TO THE CRITICISM. BUT THE FEELING HERE IS STRONG AND THERE IS AN INCREASING DEMAND TO KNOW WHAT THE US IS GOING TO DO. WE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY HEAR MORE AT THE CEREMONIAL OPENING OF THE OAU LIBERATION COMMITTEE MEETING HERE ON SATURDAY AND THE MOYO FUNERAL THE SAME DAY OR THE NEXT. KAUNDA IS EXPECTED TO MAKE A MAJOR ADDRESS AT ONE OR BOTH. THE ONGOING LIBERATION
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AND DEFENSE COMMITTEE MEETINGS WILL PROVIDE FURTHER OCCASIONS.

6. WE ASSUME THAT THE RHODESIAN SUBJECT WILL COME UP IN THE SECRETARY'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON MONDAY. WE WOULD HOPE THAT HIS REPLY COULD BE MORE FORCEFUL THAN THE SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT AND ALLUDE TO THE INEVITABLE THREAT TO THE PEACE AND STABILITY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM ANY ATTEMPT BY SMITH TO SEEK A SETTLEMENT WITHOUT GENUINE NATIONALIST ELEMENTS. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD ALSO BE DESIRABLE AT THE SAME TIME TO ANNOUNCE AN INTENTION TO SEEK EARLY REPEAL OF THE BYRD AMENDMENT AND NOTE THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S VISIT TO TANZANIA WAS INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE A CONTINUING DETERMINATION TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A JUST SETTLEMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD GIVE AN IMPRESSION OF ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND COULD HELP DEFUSE, TEMPORARILY AT LEAST, WHAT COULD OTHERWISE BE BUILDING CRITICISM OF THE US AT THE MEETINGS HERE IN LUSAKA.
LOW

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